



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## TECHNIQUE OF SUPERVISED STUDY

EUGENE D. MERRIMAN  
Washington, Indiana

An efficient program for supervised study should give every teacher the opportunity personally to direct the study of every student, every day, for every class. When the program has been worked out and the opportunity provided for supervising study on such a scale the problem of supervising *technique* immediately arises. If the proper supervising situation be provided, what will the teacher do to make it effective? In what manner will she set about to direct the thinking of the students? There are teachers who will feel inclined to use the whole of the double period in explaining, amplifying, and discussing the topics under consideration. There are others who will merely sit quietly at their desks, content to preserve order while the students study.

It would seem to be of value to formulate a technique or plan of directing students in their study which teachers may consider and follow. It is my hope that this paper may offer helpful suggestions upon this point, which may at least create discussion and investigation, invention and study, of methods of supervising class and individual study.

### A. PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS

1. The discipline of each teacher during the entire period, and particularly during the time of individual study, should be thorough and constant. If indiscriminate talking or careless methods of spending the time are permitted, the entire plan will soon be brought into disrepute.
2. The teacher should have a definite plan for the entire period, which should provide for both group and individual work. The following might be utilized:
  - a) Group résumé of fundamental ideas previously learned, in connection with the topic (5 minutes).
  - b) Group recitation upon the previous assignment (30 to 45 minutes).
  - c) New assignment (5 to 10 minutes).
  - d) Individual study period—teacher should circulate among the students for a part of the time, observing their work and assisting as may be found advisable.

- e) Group work again for a brief clearing up of points of common difficulty.

The regular period work should be supplemented by special personal work with a few who are particularly obtuse; special interviews should be arranged for this.

3. *Student self-effort and self-achievement in thinking* is to be the main object of the teacher's supervising efforts; *proper organization* of subject-matter the chief line of student effort.
4. Special preparation for the study supervision is as essential for success in this line as it is for successful recitations or assignments. This preparation should enable the teacher to have well in hand:
  - a) The knowledge of details of the particular topic.
  - b) A complete acquaintance with the study helps appropriate and available.
  - c) A thorough understanding of the study methods applicable to this particular topic, to the special subject, to the class as a whole, and to the special individuals in the class.
5. There should be a study of "study technique" carried on with the students—hardly a regular class, but frequent, or at least occasional, suggestions and investigations:
  - a) General directions for efficiency in study (printed and distributed to the entire student body).
  - b) Special group directions (scan the general directions and make applications of particular phases of them to the special subject and topic about to be studied). Discussions of special features of method particularly applicable to topics to be studied.

## B. CLASS WORK

1. Group activity and direction:
  - a) Resummarization of ideas relating to the topics under discussion which have been studied previously. This will involve the recall of facts most pertinent to the general conclusion being worked out, and the relating of these to each other and to new points in such a manner as to bring out their logical bearing in the general scheme of thought being carried on—a general backward-and-forward look upon the road of thought as it leads on, to give the student a conscious recognition of the significance of the steps in progress.
  - b) The recitation (this is the regular type of recitation with which teachers are familiar. It involves a working over of the work previously assigned, by means of questions and answers, topical recitations, special reports, oral and written).
  - c) The assignment (this again is a familiar process, but one which is frequently treated carelessly and in which the teacher may easily fail to do effective service). Without going into details with regard to the assignment there are several suggestions which may be of value:
    - (1) The problem to be worked out, or the particular thing to be accomplished or learned, should be made clear to the class as a whole.

- (2) Definite directions as to text material to be read, reference books, supplementary readings, outlines to be prepared, maps drawn, special topics by individual students, methods most advantageous for study, results expected, and forms of presenting these results should be carefully given and explained as necessary.
  - (3) Features of the assignment involving difficulties known to be beyond the students' abilities to work out for themselves, or which require more time than is advisable to work them out, should be explained in advance.
  - (4) Personal applications of the topic should be intimated to secure interest.
  - (5) Exercises involving thought and investigation should be assigned, to direct thinking and stimulate interest.
  - (6) Opportunity should be given for the students to ask questions or to offer suggestions.
2. Individual help and guidance:

This is to be given immediately after the assignment and during the period of study. It is expected that the student will devote this time to individual effort to accomplish the general work assigned. Some schools restrict all study upon the topic to the school study period, home study being forbidden. I would think it advisable to have certain phases of the study—special topics, supplementary reading, by some—be done at home or outside of school time. During this period the students will occupy themselves in:

- a) Reading the text.
- b) Memorizing material as necessary.
- c) Copying, underscoring, outlining, notebook-work, solving problems, map-drawing, organizing ideas, drilling—whatever general forms of activity may be necessary to master the assignment.

The teacher is occupied in some such method as is most advantageous to the members of the class. I do not feel that any stereotyped plan for the teacher at this time would be advisable. The situation may introduce a different plan with almost every period of study. Circumstances connected with subject-topics, or student conditions, vary constantly, and these must determine the method of procedure most helpful. However, certain things are likely to be advantageous and necessary for almost every study period, and these are suggested as follows:

- (1) Inspection of the individual work of the student:
  - (a) Is he clear as to the problem, as indicated by his reading or by the written work he is preparing?
  - (b) Does he use intelligently the study devices which have been introduced to him by the study supervisor? What is he underlining? Is he taking any kind of notes? Is he writing out a résumé of the facts given? Has he found a good reference and does he seem to be relating its material properly to the topic?
  - (c) Are the expressed results of his work correct?

- (d) Has he presented them in the best form for presentation and explanation? Are they clear? Are they objective in form?
- (e) What effort is being made to fixate ideas?

This knowledge on the part of the teacher may be acquired by a personal examination of the student's work. In many instances this can be done without remark or question; in some cases, however, questions will be necessary, directions will have to be given, and the teacher will find it necessary to sit down with the student and help personally. At this time the teacher can quietly make an appointment with the student who seems too hopelessly befuddled to master the problem without special help in large measure.

The teacher will observe points of general difficulty, and these can be presented to the class as a whole and explained. It must be remembered that the group method of teaching is extremely valuable as to time economy; individual supervision of study is largely to see if the individual is effectively carrying on group assignments, and to relieve personal confusion and misconceptions on the part of students who may be slow and stupid.

- (2) Correct mistakes, check erroneous methods. (Always endeavor to lead the student to self-correction rather than simply to correct for him.)
  - (3) Direct the use of study devices.
  - (4) Test understanding of features involved.
  - (5) Guide to correct summarization.
  - (6) Suggest additional devices, methods, references.
3. Second period of group directions:
- a) Explain (or, better, have some student whom you have observed to have the point intelligently worked out explain) the points upon which there seems to be rather common confusion.
  - b) Devote some forms of drill or exercises to impress and fix the ideas or facts which are to be of greatest future value in the understanding and appreciation of the topic under consideration.

I should advise the teacher to keep a careful record of the difficulties manifested by individual students in their study results. A trifling deflection of ideas may cause a student to be ineffective in the whole course of his thinking. A very slight misunderstanding of a general principle may reflect itself in the entire work based upon it.

It will be advantageous, therefore, for a study supervisor to understand the graphical and objective methods of expressing results.